

Oakcliffe Community Organization
Meeting Minutes– Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Opening

The regular meeting of the Oakcliffe Community Organization was called to order at 7:00 PM on February 10, 2021 by Dave Panasiuk. The meeting was a virtual meeting conducted on Zoom.com. It was recorded.

Present

Dave Panasiuk, Michelle Panasiuk, Elena Zaitsoff, Millie Sass, Sophie Robison, Rebecca Zito, Barton Kirk, Mavis Rainey, Liz Gray, Hersh Merenstein, Damon Weiss, Mark Zaitsoff, Danielle Rodriguez, Tony Igwe, JS Cohen, Chavaysha Chaney, Greg Fisher, Howard Stevens, Maria Natoli, John Diulus, Joe Panasiuk, Phil Garrow, John Berkman

Minutes

Minutes of the January 13, 2021 meeting were approved. Millie Sass motioned. Howard Stevens 2nd. Unanimous approved.

New Business

I. PWSA Lawn & Ophelia Stormwater Project – Rebecca Zito with project team.

Currently combined sewer system. Not raining – system fine. Rains ¼” both stormwater and wastewater drain to 1 pipe and may overflow to a nearby waterway. Overwhelms treatment plant. Sewage goes into storm sewers causing back up. Old and undersized infrastructure.

- Original plan from July 2018 cut to bare basics. Cost effective.
- Landscaping: Native species. Will not need regular watering. 1 year establishment period for plants. Upkeep responsibility of city.
- Captured storm water from streets will provide water to plants.
- Upper level (swing set area) will be stabilized. Weeded and seeded. No amenities.
- Lower area: Some portions meadow mix. Mowed 1- 2 times per year.
- 3 large sandstone blocks will be suitable for seating.
- Crosswalk removed in plan. Marvis said this will necessitate conversation with city. Hersh to follow up.
- Millie - Picnic table in upper area? –Would be city decision. Damon Weiss – possibly part of upper section could be mulched and used for picnic area.
- Barton Kirk - project is being fast tracked so any changes must be done asap.

- Barton Kirk – Zones within park - Next to sidewalks - “Low mow” grows slowly, mow couple times a year. Near trees – natural meadow.
- No current plan for Welcome to Community signage. PWSA planning informational signage in the future. No details to share.
- Underground: Series of tanks (like old style milk crate) that holds water. Grid type construction. Water stored there when it rains until it can be properly diverted, absorbed etc.
- Asphalt pathways instead of permeable surface. Cost saving measure.
- Elena- Sink holes on Lawn St? Maria Natoli (PWSA) will have someone look into. Hersh asked for photos and addresses so he can follow up with PWSA.
- Timeline: Wrap up final design within month. PWSA meeting process then intend to go into production this summer.

<https://www.pgh2o.com/projects-maintenance/search-all-projects/lawn-ophelia-storm-water-project>

II. Neighborhood Plan for Oakland – Department of City Planning

Sophie Robison, Project Coordinator, (D. Dauphin is unable to attend)

- **Oakland Plan Update Goal** - to have draft for public by fall. Winter to 2022 doc finalized. About another 1 year to 1 ½ year to go.
- **Would like** - grocery store, community center.
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- **Issues** - Parking and building taller and taller. Response: Sophia cannot respond to our specific concerns. She/project is just gathering information.
- **BRT** layover turnaround proposed across from Magee Hospital at Craft Place, Hamlet, and Blvd of the Allies.
 - o Mavis Rainey - Current layover at 5th and Robinson. Proposed layover is parking area off Craft Place and Hamlet. Across street from hospital and near neighborhood. Community did not have chance to give feedback. Location could potentially house 4 to 6 busses per hour, running idle. Pedestrians use area frequently. How will busses turn around? Jan 28 meeting introduced this information,.
 - o Millie will have phone call with Port Authority Head of Relations on Friday. Will attempt to set up neighborhood meeting.
 - o Marvis - Port Authority moving forward regardless of ADA issues to be addressed. This was not part of any presentation previously made to the community.

- **Boulevard and Bates intersection unsafe.** No ADA accommodations. Pedestrian crossing unsafe.
- Elena- Please explain **Points System**. Response - A community process. There are a number of items identified that are of community interest such as height, storm water management, open spaces, etc. New development gets a certain number of points for including and can earn allowances. Ex. If a development in Uptown provides open spaces they may be allowed more square footage on the lot. Point system used in Uptown and all riverfronts across city.
 - o Mark – Q. Then what the point of zoning? A. (Sophie) These are legitimate concerns. Policy does not yet exist in Oakland.

Millie - We are the back door to everything. Back of Magee etc. Dave – no retail along the Boulevard corridor even though space exists. No incentives for businesses.

- Elena - Isalys will be torn down according to UPMC. No plans to rehad. Should go for historic designation. Would make great community center. Grocery store.
- Phil did a proposal for bike access in immediate area. See proposals on Rockalley.org
- Elena – Lawn St Promenade and other trails down greenway.
- Benches, Garbage cans.
- Phil – The 3rd Space. A place where people can gather that's not at home or work. Want a gather spot.
- Trail system for workforce to commute. Educational for children – history, environmental. Details at Rockalley.org. Passive green space for all ages to relax and exercise.
- Oakland shuttle. Port Authority bus stop at Craft and the Blvd.

Link to the Oakland Plan page on engage Pgh site:

<https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/oakland>

Next Meeting – Wednesday, February 10 @ 7 pm via Zoom

